

To: Co-chairs and Members of Planning and Development Committee
From: Michele Vannelli, 1152 Poquonock Ave., Windsor, CT 06095
Re: In Favor of SB#422 (Hearing 3/11/16 @11AM)

Regarding the Bloomfield/Niagara Water deal, what occurred there could have happened in any other MDC town. Simply put, CT as a State has not been proactive in establishing guidelines and parameters to protect its citizens and our very valuable resource, water. As a municipal government entity, MDC needs more oversight put in place immediately. Niagara is not exclusively a "Bloomfield" problem or an "MDC" problem. It's all, our problem because individual MDC towns and MDC decisions affect all of us. These decisions have serious consequences. We need to get it right as they'll be no do-overs. Frankly, how can we get it right without the State Water Plan? (Due to hit General Assembly for acceptance Jan. 2018). For this reason, as a CT citizen, I urge you to at least make a start, pass SB#422 in its entirety now! To do anything less is unacceptable.

CT is in financial crisis and that places us in a very vulnerable position. All the more reason to pass this bill. It explains but does not excuse MDC for sweetening the pot with discounted rates for Niagara. After all, it's no secret their commercial customer base has shrunk over a span of many years for many reasons. Without commercial customers, large water/sewer increases are inevitable. That's why, some are ecstatic at the prospect Niagara is the goose ready to lay a golden egg with possible lower residential rates. However, I feel their enthusiasm is unwarranted. My view, Niagara, a "for profit" business, has been given a discounted rate with money paid for by MDC residents. Frankly, if Niagara can't turn a profit without residents, literally subsidizing their business in this manner, then maybe they shouldn't be a CT business in the first place. No one is subsidizing us, MDC residents, for the rates we pay for the continued high quality product we receive.

If SB#422 doesn't pass, it sets precedent for exploitation by other bottling companies soon to follow with well-orchestrated micro-timed approvals, permitting, DISCOUNTS and very lenient rationing rules.

Supply and Demand. Currently, MDC has plenty of EXCELENT supply and reading national news, we all know there's demand. Will our CT water supply last indefinitely? No one can say. There are too many variables and unknowns, droughts and contamination (geese) being among the known. Growing CT business is important to all of us but the bigger question everyone has to ask is, **AT WHAT COST?**

I'm not saying MDC shouldn't strive to sell water. That's what they do, that's their business. However, the amount of leeway they are permissioned with needs updated oversight. As a municipal government entity, they need to be held to a higher level of accountability than in years past because nationally water demands are higher and are fast becoming a recognized and valuable commodity. MDC water decisions of TODAY and ramifications for TOMORROW affect the State, its citizens, and our quality of life for generations to come.

As legislators, what you face currently is a very complex and multi-faceted issue. Get up to speed with understanding. Appreciate what's at stake and look down the road. Not passing reasonable legislation in the form of SB#422 will result in irrevocable damage. You only have to look at other states with compromised resources for lessons on what not to do. This Bill is not a cure-all, but it is a critical first step in the right direction. None of us can live without water and while the rates we pay now appear high they are nothing compared to what we will pay down the road if you don't act with good foresight and judgement immediately. Let Niagara be your wake-up call. Protect us, our water, and our state. **Please pass this Bill!**

Thank-you.